COUGARS
inClusive Opportunities for University Guidance, Academics, and RelationshipS

What is it?

An inclusive post-secondary certificate program that supports a university experience for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities
Terminology: Intellectual Disability (ID)

The term used to describe a condition characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior, which covers many everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18.
Terminology: Developmental Disability (DD)

An umbrella term that includes intellectual disability but also includes other disabilities that are apparent during childhood (i.e., autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, etc.).

- Intellectual disability and developmental disability often co-occur (but not always)
Federal and State Education Mandates

Students with I/DD are graduating from high school with very little option for post-secondary education

2008:
Federal recognition of the importance of college for individuals with ID → Higher Education Act Amendements of 2008
Today, HS Graduates with I/DD…

• are among the least likely group of students to enroll in college (Newman, Wagner, Cameto, & Knokey, 2009)

• 88% spend their time in facility-based/non-work settings (Butterworth, Hall, Smith, Migliore, Winsor, Domin, & Sulewski, 2013)

• 32% of adults with I/DD, ages 20-30, are employed compared to 74% of people without disabilities (Sulewski, Zalewska, Butterworth, & Migliore, 2013)
Post-Secondary Education for individuals with I/DD

**What are we talking about?**
College/university programs that support the inclusion of students with I/DD in academic and non-academic experiences in higher ed.

**Why**
The university experience is where many high school graduates learn career, personal, social, and community engagement knowledge and skills.
History of Post-secondary Education for Students with DD

Programs have existed since the 1970s

Generally develop in response to local needs

Large variation in programs

- Separate
- Mixed
- Fully Inclusive
COUGARS Project

Development Project Supported by
• Center for Leadership in Disability (CLD)
• Georgia Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Consortium (GAIPSEC)
• Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD)

Implementation ➔ 2-year pilot beginning Spring, 2015 (2-4 students)
• Personal Advocacy
• Health Education
• Career Development
• Civic Engagement
COUGARS Project Goals

**Academic Support**
- Time management
- Study support
- Habits of mind for learning

**Social Support**
- Peer mentoring
- Participation in student life
- Circle-of-friends

**Career Development**
- Soft skills
- Internships

**Faculty Support**
- Meaningful participation for students with I/DD
COUGARS Project Students

Complete academic classes each semester based on their degree or career interests (audit or credit options)

Program seminars focused on career, social, and personal supports

Work with peer mentors throughout the semester to engage in both academic and student life experiences
Columbus State University
Values

Excellence: …engagement, cultural enrichment, & campus environment.

Engagement: …in the university experience.

Creativity: …challenging convention and focusing on solutions.

Servant Leadership: …through empowerment and service.

Inclusion: …a campus that embraces diverse people, ideas, views, and practices.
Introduction

Casey Bishon Barker
I’m 23 years old
Graduated from Kennesaw State University May 14th

August 18, 2014
Classes

- Arts in Society, Music
- Foundation of Academic Inquiry
- World Culture and Cuisine
- Basic Culinary
- Communication
- Fitness For Living
- Concert Band
- Arts in Society, Theater
- Music, Entertainment and Business
Internships

- First I participated in Job Shadowing:
  - Parking & Transportation
  - Recreation Center
  - Owl Radio
  - Stillwell Theater

Internships:
- Pitner Elementary School: I worked as a monitor for the students.
- Bailey Performance Center: I worked as an usher/greeter
- Ponier Music Store
  - I learned: stringing, repairing and polishing guitars,
  - Packaging and unpackaging instruments,
  - making shipping labels on the computer,
  - Displaying instruments.
College Experiences

• Making new friends
• Going on trips (I joined Nature Bound and went Kayaking and horse back riding with new friends from KSU)
• Hanging out on campus (listening to all kinds of music, eating ice cream, getting free stuff)
• Living on campus (not having to listen to my parents all the time, cooking my own breakfast, eating lunch and dinner in The Commons)
What Helped?

- Mentors
  - Helped me navigate the campus the first few days
  - Took notes in class
  - Assisted with assignments and projects
- Professors
  - Through e-mail they answered questions
  - Met with me after class
- Parents
When I think about how college has affected in my life, I know that it has helped me to become more independent.

- Getting myself up and ready everyday
- Making breakfast
- Keeping a planner
- Getting to class and work on time
- Learning D2L to do my assignments
- Learning the KSU campus
- Learning how to use the shuttle (BOB)
AFTER GRADUATION

• Volunteering at the Outreach at St. Anne’s
• Working with Dr. Blalock at CSU to help with Best Buddies and to educate people here about having a disability and attending college.
• I swim on a team, Nautical Milers, in Cobb County.
• I horseback ride in Canton
• I work out at the Y
• I keep in touch with friends from NC and KSU
CAREER GOALS

- I would like very much to work with musicians, maybe in a music store.
- I want to continue to become a better drummer.
- I want to keep learning. Now I am studying for my ServSafe test.
I want professors to know that people with intellectual disabilities want to learn and become independent. Even though college books are hard, we can still learn a lot! I like to learn new things. People with disabilities want to learn about careers and to have experiences so they can get a job and be part of their community.
Transformational Outcomes for students with I/DD

Higher employment and higher earnings: Participation in both PSE and vocational rehabilitation resulted in 26% more likely to exit with paid jobs and 73% higher income (Migliore, Butterworth, & Hart, 2009)

Increase personal satisfaction across life domains (emotional well being, interpersonal relationships, personal development, self-determination, social inclusion) (Hughston, Moodie, & Uditsky, 2006)
Transformational Outcomes for students without I/DD

Typical students gain new insights into those with I/DD → Confront the prejudice and stigma associated with those with I/DD

**Intergroup Contact Theory**: Contact between members of different groups can work to reduce prejudice and intergroup conflict

- Direct positive contact = Increased positive regard
COUGARS

Dr. Greg Blalock (706-568-5394)
College of Education and Health Professions